

Today is the Feast of the Apostle, St. James the Greater.

I suppose this begs the question: did he win the apostolic arm wrestling contest? Because there is another Apostle named James - who is called "the Lesser."

Maybe he was taller, maybe he was fatter. Maybe he was richer, or maybe smarter.

Whatever the reason, it is lost in antiquity.

St. James is the patron of Spain. And according to tradition, on January 2, in the year 40 - the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him in Spain. The site is still there at what is called "Our Lady of the Pillar." After this apparition, James returned to Judea, where as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, he was beheaded by King Herod Agrippa.

He is the only Apostle whose death is recorded in Scripture.

In the Gospel, we hear the story of how James and John's mother - John is St. John the Evangelist - asked for her two sons to sit at Jesus' right and left side in the Kingdom of God.

Interesting here is that not only didn't the Apostles always get what Jesus was saying, but neither did their mother.

We heard the rest in the Gospel, and the two brothers agreed to "*drink the chalice that [Jesus is] going to drink.*"

In our own time, we live in what can be called a comfort culture.

Air conditioning, indoor plumbing, curtains, carpet, TV, lights, refrigerators, electricity.

The idea of suffering is so terrible in most modern individual's thoughts, that there are pain relievers of all sorts ... with all sorts of side effects.

I remember a doctor telling me once that I could take one sort of pain reliever at the same time as another pain reliever if I wanted - one would damage my liver, and the other would damage my kidneys. I opted not to take either.

Our Lord suffered terribly on the cross, and calls us to not only "*drink the chalice*" but also to take up our cross and follow Him.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for the grace of perseverance in the midst of suffering. So that we might not shy away from the Cross, but rather embrace it.

May we receive the graces we need to be Apostles in our own time, and to evangelize our family, friends, coworkers, and the world.